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HUMAN IMMORTALITY. Two supposed Objections to the Doctrine. By William James. 1897.

DIONYSOS AND IMMORTALITY: The Greek Faith in Immortality as affected by the rise of Individualism. By Benjamin Ide Wheeler. 1898.

THE CONCEPTION OF IMMORTALITY. By Josiah Royce. 1899.

LIFE EVERLASTING. By John Fiske. 1900.

SCIENCE AND IMMORTALITY. By William Osler. 1904.

THE ENDLESS LIFE. By Samuel M. Crothers. 1905.

INDIVIDUALITY AND IMMORTALITY. By Wilhelm Ostwald. 1906.

THE HOPE OF IMMORTALITY. By Charles F. Dole. 1907.

BUDDHISM AND IMMORTALITY. By William S. Bigelow. 1908.

IS IMMORTALITY DESIRABLE? By G. Lowes Dickinson. 1909.

EGYPTIAN CONCEPTIONS OF IMMORTALITY. By George A. Reisner. 1911.

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY IN THE SONNETS OF SHAKESPEARE. By George H. Palmer. 1912.

METEMPSYCHOSIS. By George Foot Moore. 1914.

PAGAN IDEAS OF IMMORTALITY DURING THE EARLY ROMAN EMPIRE. By Clifford Herschel Moore. 1918.

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IMMORTALITY AND THEISM

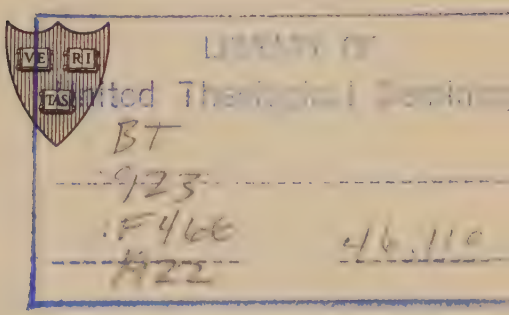
The Ingersoll Lecture, 1921

IMMORTALITY AND THEISM

By

William Wallace Fenn

Bussey Professor of Theology



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THE INGERSOLL LECTURESHIP

Extract from the will of Miss Caroline Haskell Ingersoll, who died in Keene, County of Cheshire, New Hampshire, Jan. 26, 1893

First. In carrying out the wishes of my late beloved father, George Goldthwait Ingersoll, as declared by him in his last will and testament, I give and bequeath to Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass., where my late father was graduated, and which he always held in love and honor, the sum of Five thousand dollars ($5,000) as a fund for the establishment of a Lectureship on a plan somewhat similar to that of the Dudleian lecture, that is — one lecture to be delivered each year, on any convenient day between the last day of May and the first day of December, on this subject, "the Immortality of Man," said lecture not to form a part of the usual college course, nor to be delivered by any Professor or Tutor as part of his usual routine of instruction, though any such Professor or Tutor may be appointed to such service. The choice of said lecturer is not to be limited to any one religious denomination, nor to any one profession, but may be that of either clergyman or layman, the appointment to take place at least six months before the delivery of said lecture.

The above sum to be safely invested and three fourths of the annual interest thereof to be paid to the lecturer for his services and the remaining fourth to be expended in the publishment and gratuitous distribution of the lecture, a copy of which is always to be furnished by the lecturer for such purpose. The same lecture to be named and known as "the Ingersoll lecture on the Immortality of Man."

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IMMORTALITY AND THEISM

PSYCHICAL Research holds so large a place today in popular interest and discussion that whoever is invited to speak upon immortality cannot, with decency, omit to notice this phase of his subject. Yet I approach it with the utmost diffidence and reluctance; reluctantly, for even if the facts were more thoroughly established and the inferences more clearly warranted than is actually the case, the argument would still seem to me of only secondary importance; and diffidently, because experienced investigators unanimously declare that one who knows the evidence only at second hand has no right to express or even, it would seem, to hold an opinion on the subject. Now,

I have never visited a psychic, seen a table tip, or watched the whirling pointer of a ouija board, and unblushingly confess that I have no intention or desire ever to do any one of these things. For no opinion of mine based upon direct personal experience in such matters would be worth a straw. I have no skill in detecting fraud; the performance of a professional magician entertains me greatly, but my enjoyment lies just in the childish pleasure of mystification which I would not barter for the vain pride of discovering how the tricks are done. Any humbug of a medium could pull wool over my eyes without half trying, and as for trusting the evidence of my own senses, long experience of their fallibility has made that plea only an occasion for sardonic laughter. Besides, at the faintest suspicion that one of my own beloved dead was actually trying to communicate with me, what

little critical faculty I possess would be instantly swamped in a swelling flood of tender sentiment. Loving memories would discover delicate nuances where none exist and crowd the actual happening with elements of my own supplying. Perfectly aware of these disqualifications as an investigator of such phenomena, I simply must take the evidence at second-hand, and rely solely upon the published report of others, remembering however that they also may have sensibilities not unlike my own. Not that such a recollection is much needed in dealing with the published reports of the Psychical Research Society, for one cannot go far in this literature without coming to have confidence not only in the perfect candor of the investigators who record misses and hits with equal fidelity as, for example, in the cruelly disappointing case of the Myers letter, but also in their acuteness to guard against

fraud, and shrewdness in detecting it when actually attempted. It is shameful for hostile critics to speak contemptuously of men and women of character and standing who are sincerely trying to explore this mysterious field in the interests of truth. Sir Oliver Lodge's *Raymond* is very painful reading in spots, but one cannot withhold a tribute of admiration for the eminent physicist who was willing to jeopardize his scientific reputation, and expose his private sorrow to public scorn, by publishing pages which must have been even harder for him to write than they are for us to read. And as for the competence of the investigators, why, the critics would lead us to suppose that Hodgson, for example, was utterly inexperienced in the ways of knavery, but Madame Blavatsky did not find him purblind and foolishly credulous, or that other investigators were gullible to the last degree,

as if Carrington had not published elaborate disclosures of the tricks employed by professional mediums. And since I am speaking of critics, let me add that they also seem to make rather too much of the triviality of the alleged communications. As a rule, they are indeed either hopeless twaddle, or pompous nothings, but there are exceptions which must be reckoned with. In fact it is rather probable that adverse judgment proceeds largely upon the supposition that those who have escaped the bonds of the flesh must certainly pass at once into purer intelligence and more perfect wisdom. But why should this be taken for granted in advance? It may be that the soul really does need flesh and that the discarnate state, if such there be, is less desirable than this. Possibly the Homeric view is truer than that of Socrates, or than that which has been the staple of pulpit and Sunday-school instruction.

Unless one has already come to believe in immortality for other reasons, is he entitled to presuppose that to the sort of existence which these communications disclose all of us are not miserably doomed, that survival may not be a curse instead of the blessing we have fondly hoped? Certainly, to make the unpalatableness of reported facts a reason for disbelieving them is no sign of a truth-loving mind. Yet it must be added that only on the ground of unimpeachable evidence ought one to insult his honored dead by ascribing to them such vapidities as frequently occur in alleged communications from them.

If I seem to have spoken on both sides of the question, my only justification is that with respect to this, as to most of the questions which intimately concern us, there are in fact two sides for each of which a great deal may be said. If, however, we undertake to state what seems

to have been established as outcome of the long and laborious investigations of the Society for Psychical Research, it may be said at once that many of the phenomena reviewed, most of the physical manifestations for instance, have no direct bearing upon the question of survival which alone concerns us here. Even if Home, or Hume, was actually levitated or elongated, or was able to pluck a live coal from a blazing fire and hold it with impunity in his unprotected hand, in such things there would be no evidence for immortality unless, indeed, the experience last mentioned were held to offer some encouragement with regard to the future sufferings of the unblest dead. There does seem, however, to be a general agreement that particularly in trance conditions certain persons have shown knowledge which cannot have been acquired through normal channels. The important point, then, is the method by

which this knowledge has been derived, the source from which it comes. Some are convinced that it can proceed only from the minds of discarnate human beings who thus give evidence that they have survived bodily dissolution. It is quite true that this inference if legitimate would not of itself warrant an argument for immortality in the strict sense of the word, since these discarnate personalities might ultimately cease to exist as such through disintegration or absorption, but it cannot be denied that if it could be securely drawn many of the difficulties which hinder our acceptance of the doctrine would be removed and we should almost certainly yield ourselves to a comfortable hope. But is this a legitimate inference? We need not delay over the hypothesis that the phenomena accepted as genuine are due to the activities of evil spirits who thus seek to lure mortals to their harm, — an hypothesis

frequently accompanied by sinister insinuations as to effects produced upon the character of those who habitually practice such things. That, from the point of view of traditional Christianity, some of the alleged communications are quite unorthodox, verging on advanced liberalism in religious thought, or even on Theosophy, a fact which has led Conan Doyle to speak of them as a new revelation, seems to many sufficient reason for ascribing them to demons. But those who have no place in their world view for diabolic agencies cannot be expected to regard this explanation with favor, even when supported by New Testament testimony as to demoniacal possession. It is noteworthy, however, that those who advance this theory accept the genuineness of the phenomena.

Undoubtedly one must allow for coincidences. This is a world in which queer things are wont to happen, in which

remarkable coincidences occur. May I refer, by way of illustration, to an incident which recently came to my knowledge in this exceedingly, one is tempted to say excessively, regular portion of the universe? A young man calling one evening upon friends found them in much perturbation over the loss of a ticket to the Cambridge symphony concerts. It had been lent them by a neighbor for a single performance and must be returned promptly for the owner's use at the next concert, but it could not be found. Jokingly, the young man said, "I'll tell you where it is, it's in the programme which you brought home from the last concert." "But," was the reply, "we don't know where that is, either." "Why," said the visitor, "it has fallen down behind the table in your front entry." A member of the family ran into the front hall and returned in a moment with the programme in her hand. "Well," she said

to the young man, "you were right about that, the programme was where you said we should find it, but since you are so wise where in the programme is the ticket?" "Opposite page six," was the confident reply. The pamphlet was opened at once and sure enough opposite the very page which he had designated the long sought ticket was found. Now the young man was not at the concert, had not visited the house for several weeks, did not see the programme behind the hall table when he entered, and as for the number of the page, that was a pure guess. Barring a general familiarity with the ways of concert goers, such as putting a ticket in a programme, throwing the latter upon a hall table on entering the house, etc., the whole business was sheer coincidence — but it would have made the reputation of a medium! It is beyond question that such coincidences have played a rôle in

more serious situations and we must allow for them, but even so not all the well authenticated facts seem explicable in this way.

Accordingly, another and much more popular theory is that generally and very vaguely referred to as telepathy, which holds that the source of the knowledge referred to is the mind of a living person to which in some mysterious way the mind of the psychic gets access. But this fashionable explanation does not seem altogether sufficient. Are we quite sure as to the reality and scope of telepathy, and that it is not merely a term descriptive of precisely this class of cases? Indeed, one half suspects that the principle of telepathy would not be so readily accepted, if it did not offer a natural way of escape from the spiritistic hypothesis. Moreover, if we may regard telepathy as well established on other grounds, it would seem to be con-

fined for the most part to impressions deliberately produced at comparatively short range upon the mind of another who is voluntarily receptive, and to extend it so far as to cover the successful exploration of the mind of a person at a distance quite unaware of the experiment, strains the hypothesis to the snapping point. Furthermore, the precision with which precisely the memories wanted are evoked is baffling. It may be noted in passing that we are beset here by an awkward dilemma. A statement of fact obtained in such conditions has no evidential value unless it can be verified, but if it is capable of verification at all it is usually because some living person remembers the occurrence and thus the possibility of telepathy is always present. It would seem therefore that as a rule wherever a statement can be verified, telepathy cannot be excluded, but the hypothesis can hardly cover all the well authenticated facts.

One must pass a similar judgment upon the explanation which rests upon a supposed capacity or faculty of subconsciousness. If in the trance condition, it is the ordinarily subconscious which rises above the threshold, how did the facts in question find their way into this *tohu wa-bohu* originally? Was it in normal ways long ago forgotten? Has the subconsciousness of an individual some sort of connection with the subconsciousness of others or with a vast reservoir in which all experiences of all souls are permanently pooled? But in either case, why is it that exactly these appropriate elements mount into conscious recognition? If such difficulties attend the theories of telepathy and the subconscious taken severally, they are increased rather than diminished by any combination of the two. Not that they may not be removed as a result of further investigation, but in the present state of

our knowledge they give us serious pause. I feel bound to confess therefore that none of these explanations seems to me quite adequate. Nor is any better theory now in sight. Yet I am quite unconvinced that the spiritistic explanation is sound, and mainly for the following reason. These communications form but a small part of a large number of surprising phenomena of various kinds, for many of which the spiritistic hypothesis is unnecessary and one would think entirely inappropriate. No spirit tips down or up the end of a dowsing rod or conveys to a recipient the imprint of a concealed card. Unless raps or table-tippings spell out intelligible words, no spirit needs to be invoked to explain their occurrence. But since all these phenomena seem to belong together, it is a reasonable hypothesis that they are all due to a single cause or to cognate causes, and since to many of them the hypothesis of spirits is inappli-

cable, the presumption is that we must look farther for a cause or causes more appropriate to the entire group of cases. Moreover, the psychic life of man is now known to be indefinitely more mysterious than we used to think, and who can now say what powers are hidden in these uncanny depths? Accordingly, I for one feel obliged to conclude that it is better to leave the question open than to fall back upon the more than dubious hypothesis of disembodied spirits. In other words, there is evidence enough to justify further inquiry, but not enough to warrant a decision either way.

That this is an impotent and humiliating conclusion will be frankly admitted but so far as I can see no other is at present possible. If this were what William James described as a momentous issue, one might be tempted to exercise his will to believe, but I at least cannot regard it as such for it does not seem to

me that it is cardinal to belief in immortality. If it were, recalling the general tone of the communications to which reference has already been made, it is not at all certain on which side of the question the will to believe would fall. One might easily prefer to become extinct than to live on as an immortal fool. But there are other considerations which are more important and to these we must now turn. Not without a sense of relief, for surely during the preceding discussion many must have recalled Emerson's saying in *The Over-Soul*, "The moment the doctrine of the immortality is separately taught, man is already fallen." By this he means that the idea of immortality lives only in the context of truth and holiness, love and beauty, flourishing when these flourish, decaying when these decay, and that to tear it out of this its vital context and seek to support it by arguments belonging to an-

other and lower level betokens both a fallen doctrine and a fallen man. "There is no doctrine of the reason," he says again, "which will bear to be taught by the understanding." Yet most of us have fallen from the skyey peak where Emerson habitually dwelt, or have never risen to it, and despite his warning we are called upon to consider the idea of immortality on the level where we actually are. In doing so we are not wholly without justification even by Emerson himself, for surely the Over-soul has access to the understanding too, and both peak and plain belong to the same world. As the Schoolmen were confident that the voice of revelation was identical with that of reason differing only in clearness of tone, and precision of articulation, so we trust that even fumbling thoughts of humble men are groping toward the bright convincing vision of the exalted seer.

It is but putting Emerson's thought in other phrase to say that some of our beliefs have causes while others have reasons, although in reality the difference is mainly one of emphasis and probably all the beliefs of thoughtful men have both psychological causes and logical reasons. Yet the difference is real, for the distribution of emphasis does vary. It is also true that the deeper the subject the more do our beliefs concerning it depend upon causes rather than reasons. Religious thinkers have sometimes called such beliefs intuitions, affirming that they *stand to reason* in default of reasons. The most thorough-going idealist, in his most conspicuous moments of mental levitation, behaves as if the world of sense were real quite as certainly as the veriest clodhopper who has never so much as heard of the Over-soul, even as the philosopher, disputing the reality of time, keeps his eye on the clock lest he

miss his train. For all that, every man has a certain mental and moral context, a structure of ideas, if you please, which welcomes or repels another's thought, and, to a large extent, determines his own mind in dealing with all subjects whatsoever. Call this prejudice if you will, but before condemning it out of hand consider whether it may not be the result of many previous judgments which were rational. The claim to perfect impartiality is absurd, as if a plant should pretend to impartiality in the way it deals with sunshine and soil; its structure determines what and how it will assimilate. Every one of us has a mental and moral context which inevitably affects his judgment on particular subjects according as ideas are or are not coherent with it. If that fact spell limitation, — well, limitation is not unpardonable in the case of naturally finite beings possessed of individuality, and frank ac-

knowledgment should turn the edge of sharp reproach.

Nor is it clear that beliefs which owe more to causes than reasons should therefore be disparaged, since an idea which fits into one's rational framework as a whole may well be truer than one which falls in with but a single intellectual process. It follows then that one who would present his thought upon any particular subject should first declare plainly his general point of view. That he has one is certain, or if he has not, his opinions on all subjects will lack clearness and consistency. It is equally certain that they can appeal to others as they do to him, only in so far as they sympathize with his point of view. This is especially the case when the subject treated is one that lies below the surface of things and near the deepest springs of thought and conduct. Immortality is certainly a subject of this sort and there-

fore it must be said at once that it is to be presented now from the point of view of theism. It would be sheer pretence, easily detected, for me to attempt to discuss it in any other way, for it is quite impossible for one who really believes in God to consider otherwise any momentous issue whatsoever. It is not for me here and now to present the reasons which have brought me to this central conviction or even to define precisely and fully my theistic belief. As to the latter point it must suffice to say that for me theism means belief in personality as the source and sum of all values and ideals, best apprehended by us intellectually in the form of purpose animating and unifying all reality, a purpose which finds its progressive fulfillment in the growth of moral ideals and human efforts for their realization. To those who have no sympathy with this point of view, the present lecture will have little or no

significance; to those who have, it may, perhaps, help to a little clearer vision.

Approaching the subject, then, from faith in God one finds prompt relief from what is probably the greatest obstacle to belief in immortality — viz., the close and, so far as our present experience goes, the inviolable connection between mind and body. We know of no thought apart from brain any more than we know of life apart from a physical organism. If then psychic life is inseparable (again, so far as our experience goes) from physical structure, growing with its growth, deteriorating with its decay, how is it possible for us to conceive that with the complete disintegration of brain structure the psychic life associated with it does not also disappear. This is not quite certain however. There is always danger in making present experience the final criterion of all possible experience. Moreover, there is

some reason to hold that while at the early stages of the mind-body organism, body takes the lead, yet as development proceeds the mind gradually wins precedence with at least an intimation that on the dissolution of partnership it may have acquired sufficient capital to carry on an independent business. Into this debate, however, I have no call to enter now, for the objection collapses before the accepted thought of God. We believe in God but do not conceive of him as having physical existence; we speak of the mind of God but never of a brain of God. If God is, and if he is as we think Him, here at any rate is psychic life independent of physical structure, and therefore the universal and necessary character of the connection is denied.

Let it be added, moreover, that as it is totally impossible for us to conceive of God, in the way of picturing, so is it

equally impossible for us to form any image of a disembodied existence for ourselves. And this just because our present experience is of mind in body. It is quite futile then to make the attempt in either case and immortality is inconceivable in the sense of representation. We may be uplifted by the refined and lovely conceptions of Swedenborgians or disgusted by the grotesque and vulgar delineations of contemporary mediums but must confess that all are alike fanciful. By the very nature of the case we are compelled to acknowledge that experience provides no forms upon which imagination can lay hold. In such circumstances, speculation must be quite unprofitable and should be rigorously excluded.

If, then, we proceed to make explicit the implications of our thought of God it is plain that the theist, perforce, thinks of this as a world which has

rational, moral, aesthetic and religious significance. Thus are suggested four lines of thought leading to belief in immortality.

What is involved in a rationally significant world? The argument here has been put once for all by John Fiske, in whose footsteps I follow *non passibus aequis*, recapitulating baldly and briefly what he wrote richly and fully. Out of whirling star-dust, out of monstrous reptiles in primeval slime, out of the savagery and cruelty of the animal world, the human values have emerged and still are growing. Marvelous is the process wherein they have appeared, but the same process forbids their continuance here, after the temperature of the globe shall have reached a point at which human life must perish. It may indeed be true that that point is more remote than we used to think but apparently nobody doubts that it will ultimately be reached. What

then will remain as creditable result of the long world process? Nothing of all that now exists to justify it. But then the whole process lies under the condemnation of irrationality and the longer the process proves to be, the more crushing is this indictment. Yet wherever we turn in the world we find rationality and it is hard to believe that a process rational in all its details is irrational as a whole. A rationally significant world requires that these human values laboriously won shall continue to exist, if not here then elsewhere, but that means immortality, for human values inhere only in human personalities. They cannot be floating, unattached, abstract existences and unless we are prepared to say that having been attained by us human beings they survive only in the personality of God which we have served thus to enrich, which would mean that human love nourishes divine selfishness, there is no

other alternative than the conclusion that a rationally significant world implies the immortality of human personalities. It must be observed, also, that this argument carries us beyond the thought of racial immortality, the choir invisible of George Eliot. Beautiful and inspiring as the idea is, we are constrained to admit that since it is the human race which is doomed to extinction here, the irrationality of the process lacking immortality is not thereby relieved.

The same consideration meets us in the case of a morally significant world. The argument has sometimes been put in ways which are repulsive to the moral sense as when it has been pleaded that there must be an evening-up of lots, heavenly compensation for earthly sufferings, but our very repugnance to this presentation implies that the world even as it now is, with all its cruelty and suffering, has moral significance neverthe-

less. In its more acceptable form, the argument is for the persistence of moral values, of the courage which suffered for righteousness sake, the sympathetic love which refused no burden or toil by which another could be helped. If these traits can forever vanish out of the world, it is not in any full sense a morally significant world, and disappear they must unless human personality can survive this frozen planet in other conditions of existence.

If we hold the world aesthetically significant we shall be carried to the same conclusion. Does the world as it now is satisfy our ideal of beauty? At times, and in part, it undoubtedly does. Contemplation of the world of nature excites aesthetic appreciation and there are occasions when such appreciation is unqualified but this is not invariably the case; when an informed mind lies behind the eye the impression is often quite

different. Man has an ideal of goodness which the nature world often painfully contradicts; he has an ideal of a world in which dwells no ugliness or racking pain and this ideal the actual world does not satisfy. Yet we are so constituted that we cannot feel to be beautiful that which we judge to be not good. So it often seems that the world of the ideal and that of the actual are contradictory. But our persistent demand for unity will not permit us to rest in such a severance and if man with all his ideals, this included, is rooted in the nature world then his very unfulfilled ideals suggest in nature a reality surpassing the actual. So, indeed, as Dr. Everett used to say, "Nature, too, is a great idealist"; and this is, in fact, the theistic view of the world, for as in man, the actual and the ideal are united truly only by a purpose to transform the actual into the ideal, so because of the purpose of God that which

shall be as actuality is already present as possibility in the world that now is, and reality in its fulness includes both the efficient ideal and the actual which is to be transformed into its likeness. Our sense of beauty at its best is our response to reality apprehended in its completeness. This is a world of process and process gets its only unity in purpose. So considered, the total reality of nature includes not the actual alone but also the controlling and unifying purpose, —a stage in whose self-fulfilling process is the present actuality, — and in addition the possibility now latent in the actual which the purpose is yet to bring into full realization. So the actual and the ideal world are united and man's ideals of unity and beauty are both justified. In relation to our subject, this applies to the presence in man of possibilities to which his ideals bear witness which never become actual in his earthly exist-

ence. It is in God's purpose that man's ideal shall eventually become actual, but this seldom if ever occurs, perhaps indeed it never can occur, in the earthly life of any individual; hence if man's ideals are part of his reality immortality alone suffices for that full self-realization which the purpose of God intends.

One further point deserves mention. The experience of beauty offers an instructive paradox. In moments of aesthetic joy we feel most highly and fully ourselves and yet it is in precisely these moments that the limitations of our individual selves seem to melt away while, like Emerson, we yield ourselves to the perfect whole. In this paradox of experience we catch suggestions of an answer to the view which conceives of immortality as an absorption into the great whole of being. There is indeed the unity of the part with the whole, but it is not a unity wherein the part

sacrifices its place and function or ceases to be conscious of itself as part even when most vividly conscious of the whole to which it belongs. On the contrary, when the consciousness of the whole is most intense, that of the part as part becomes, if our experience of beauty is trustworthy, correspondingly intense, as Emerson again has written, "Lost in God, in Godhead *found*."

The argument from the religious significance of the world has sometimes taken a form which I humbly confess is beyond my reach. When religious men speak of communion with God as of the familiar intercourse of friend with friend, of son with father, and plead the incredibility that such intercourse can be terminated by death, I would not for a moment question their testimony or controvert their argument; only to such an experience as they relate I, personally, am still a stranger, and consequently the

argument based upon it however convincing to others is not so to me. Rather let us put it in this way: — If theism means that the world finds its unity in a vast controlling purpose, then religion at its best means consciousness of that purpose and devotion to the values at which it aims. Our moral ideals represent the aim of the purpose in so far as we are capable of apprehending it and with growing capacity of apprehension our ideals also progress. Can man ever reach a point at which his actual self shall be perfectly coincident with his real self, at which all his possibilities shall be fully realized and he is no longer conscious of an ideal call? That seems to me quite inconceivable; for us, always, the Pilgrims' Chorus, instead of the complacent chant of the arrived; in God's purpose concerning us there is always the progressive fulfillment both in us individually and by us in the world. In

other words, the religious view of life presents itself to me as the endless pursuit of an ever advancing goal, that is what God's purpose for us means, that purpose never is fulfilled, the process of self-realization is never complete, when death comes, but God's purpose carries over the physical experience and man keeps on forever. Thus it is that a religiously significant world means immortality.

In what has been said there is an apparent contradiction which requires us now to consider with utmost brevity the two ways in which purpose may be conceived and its fulfillment understood. We may think of it as aiming at a remote but definite and fixed end in the attainment of which alone it finds fulfillment, or we may think of it as finding its fulfillment in the very on-going of the process itself. In the former case, the successive stages are reached, passed

through, and then simply left behind, having no value save as they stand for ever closer approximations to a goal which alone has worth; in the latter, so far at least as the human world is concerned, every stage is gathered up as an enduring moment, making its peculiar and permanent contribution to the value of the process as an artistic whole. One traveller on a railway train is intent solely upon reaching his journey's end, checking off with satisfaction station after station which brings him so much nearer to his goal; another finds his interest and object in the journey as a whole and every bit of the country through which the train passes, little patches of violets or houstonia on the right of way; glimpses of rhodora in enticing swamps, flashing visions of distant hills clothed in the filmy beauty of half-opened leaves, tiny villages rich with suggestions of human experience, is seen

with passing delight and treasured up in happy memory as a durable satisfaction. In a good drama, the play is not for the ending, but the ending is for the play as a whole; the purpose of the artist permeates every detail of the unfolding plot and not a scene or word could be lacking to the perfection of the drama. "God is an artist, not an artizan," as John Davidson sang, or, as Dr. Royce taught us (a poet writing in prose), in an individual whole every part is individual with the individuality of the whole. The stages of the process have value for the process as a whole. In some such way we conceive of this vast world process animated and unified by the divine purpose. We human beings, little and humble as we are, are bearers of an individuated part of that great purpose. We are not merely instruments to an end. As we carry individuated portions of the purpose, so we are individual parts of the

end which that purpose seeks. The perfection of each of us is necessary to the perfect fulfillment of the purpose, — perfection not as that of a finished product, but as that of a living, growing member of an organic whole. Drop a single word from a poet's line and the line is marred and the poem imperfect; drop but a single human soul out of the divine drama and its perfection is forever lost. So at least stands the faith of a theist.

It is a common and on the whole a true saying that a man is known by the company he keeps; similarly an idea is known and judged by its context. Judge by this test the idea of immortality. It has no affiliation with the ignoble passions of avarice or lust; it has indeed been associated with selfishness but it has freed itself from this entanglement and is now interwoven with love of truth, love of friends, and the passion for con-

tinued usefulness. Its home is with man's highest virtues and it is measured by our faith in them, and so at last we reach again the thought of Emerson and are reminded of the whole passage from which a single sentence has been already quoted.

"Men ask concerning the immortality of the soul, and the employments of heaven, the state of the sinner, and so forth. They even dream that Jesus has left replies to precisely these interrogatories. Never a moment did that sublime spirit speak in their *patois*. To truth, justice, love, the attributes of the soul, the idea of immutableness is essentially associated. Jesus, living in these moral sentiments heedless of sensual fortunes, heeding only the manifestations of these, never made the separation of the idea of duration from the essence of these attributes, nor uttered a syllable concerning the duration of the soul. It was left to

his disciples to sever duration from the moral elements and to teach the immortality of the soul as a doctrine, and maintain it by evidences. The moment the doctrine of the immortality is separately taught, man is already fallen. In the flowing of love, in the adoration of humility there is no question of continuance."

This indeed is the proud and joyous confession of a theist. Believing in God, he must needs think worthily of the world and of man its, as yet, highest product. Notwithstanding all that seems not so, he cherishes unbounded confidence that highest good is highest truth and waits humbly and happily for the working out of God's good purpose, well assured that where that purpose reigns nothing of spiritual and universal worth is too good to be true, nothing. How good immortality would be, we say to ourselves wistfully when we think of

young and promising lives cruelly ended on the ghastly battle-fields or in the hospitals of the war, of broken friendships and frustrated hopes, — how good! and with reverent humility one who believes in God replies — yes, too good not to be true!

Friend, surely so
For this I know
That our faiths are foolish by falling below
Not coming above what God will show.

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